

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 13414 01 OF 02 171920Z

65

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 025309

R 171700Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9490

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 13414

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, US, IT
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR COSSIGA

SUMMARY. ON AUGUST 16, SENATOR ABRAHAM RIBICOFF AND I CALLED ON MINISTER OF INTERIOR FRANCESCO COSSIGA WHO IS ONE OF THE FEW SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT PRESENTLY IN ROME. COSSIGA'S FORTHRIGHT EXPOSITION OF HIS VIEWS ON NUMEROUS QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN ITALY SHOULD BE OF INTEREST TO THE DEPARTMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKING AS A "TRUE DEMOCRAT", COSSIGA SAID THAT HE FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT ITALY'S PARTICIPATION IN NATO AND HER CLOSE TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR HER CIVIL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FOR HER DEFENSE. NEVERTHELESS, HE STRESSED THAT A EUROPEAN INTEGRATION POLICY, MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ARE NOT EQUAL TO SOCIAL CONSERVATISM. AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LEFT WING OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC), COSSIGA NOTED HIS CONVICTION THAT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RENOVATION OF THE COUNTRY IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE FREEDOM.

2. COSSIGA DESCRIBED THE SITUATION IN ITALY AS EXTREMELY SERIOUS. THERE IS A POLITICAL CRISIS AND AN ECONOMIC CRISIS THAT THE RECENT ELECTIONS HAVE NOT SOLVED BUT SIMPLY DELAYED. IN HIS VIEW, THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THIS IMPASSE IS TO ESTABLISH A NEW SOLIDARITY AMONG THE TRADITIONAL DEMOCRATIC FORCES. THIS COURSE OFFERS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 13414 01 OF 02 171920Z

THE ONLY TRUE PATH TO A STRONG AND STABLE GOVERNMENT

(WHICH THE PRESENT ANDREOTTI IS NOT) WHICH COULD HAVE A NORMAL DIALOGUE WITH THE COMMUNISTS (PCI) IN THE CONTEXT OF A BLANACED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MAJORITY AND THE OPPOSITION.

3. TURNING TO THE PCI, COSSIGA SAID THAT HE KNOWS THEM WELL AND IS ONE WHO NOT ONLY HAS FREQUENT CONTACTS WITH THEM BUT ALSO IS RELATED TO THE PARTY'S SECRETARY GENERAL. THE PCI, HE ADDED, IS WELL AWARE THAT HE IS NEITHER A COMMUNIST, A PRO-COMMUNIST, NOR A PHILO-COMMUNIST. IN HIS VIEW, THE PARTY DOES HAVE WITHIN ITS RANKS THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN THE EVOLUTION OF A SO-CALLED EUROCOMMUNISM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF FREEDOM AND PLURALISM. HOWEVER, THIS IS ONLY A GROUP WITHIN THE PCI, AND ALTHOUGH IT REPRESENTS THE MAJORITY IN THE PARTY TODAY, IT IS NOT THE ENTIRE PARTY. ESPOUSING HIS CONVICTION THAT THE PCI BELIEVES IN THE SOLIDARITY OF THE VARIOUS COMMUNIST PARTIES ON THE INTERNATIONAL PLANE, COSSIGA THEN SAID THAT MOSCOW'S INFLUENCE IS EXERCISED ON THE PARTY IN FOUR WAYS: 1) INDIRECTLY, ON THE BASIS OF THE IDEOLOGICAL AND IDEAL SOLIDARITY AMONG ALL COMMUNIST PARTIES; 2) THROUGH PRO-SOVIET ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PARTY OF WHOM SOME ARE KNOWN; 3) THROUGH FINANCIAL BONDS; AND 4) BECAUSE IT IS A KNOWN FACT THAT THE PARTY IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE SOVIET INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN ITALY.

4. CONCERNING PCI FINANCING FROM THE USSR, COSSIGNA SAID THAT THIS IS BASED PARTIALLY ON DIRECT CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MOSCOW TO THE PARTY (WHICH THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS REASON TO BELIEVE PASS THROUGH THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN ROME) AND ON PERCENTAGES PAID TO THE PCI ON ALL TRADE WITH COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE. THE DC FEELS UNABLE TO EXPLOIT THIS MATERIAL BECAUSE OF ALLEGATIONS ABOUT US INVOLVEMENT IN FINANCING OF POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IT INTALY (HE MENTIONED AMBASSADOR MARTIN'S ACTIVITIES.) AND THE GENERALLY LEFTIST BENT OF THE ITALY PRESS.

5. REGARDING PCI FOREIGN POLICY, COSSIGA SAID THAT THE PARTY IS ATTEMPTING TO PROVE THAT ITS POSSIBLE PRESENCE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ROME 13414 01 OF 02 171920Z

IN THE GOVERNING MAJORITY WOULD NOT MEAN ITALY'S EXIT FROM NATO OR A CHANGE IN ITALY'S RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE BELIEVES THAT BERLINGUER PERSONALLY WOULD NOT WANT ITALY OUT OF NATO OR UNFRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. NEVERTHELESS, COSSIGA FELT IT HIS DUTY TO TELL THE UNITED STATES THAT THE DC LEADERSHIP IS CONVINCED AN EVENTUAL PCI ENTRY INTO AN ITALY GOVERNMENT WOULD MEAN A CHANGE

IN THE COUNTRY'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION AND ITALY COULD HOPE, AT BEST, TO BECOME ANOTHER AUSTRIA OR ANOTHER FINLAND. THE FOREIGN POLICY MAKERS OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF WESTERN EUROPE MUST KEEP THIS IN MIND.

6. AT THE PRESENT TIME, COSSIGA FEELS THAT ITALY'S FRIENDS SHOULD GIVE THE DC THE MEANS TO FIGHT BOTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY AND, CONCURRENTLY, THEY SHOULD TAKE SOME ACTION WITH THE SMALLER DEMOCRATIC PARTIES TO CONVINCE THEM TO RETURN TO A COALITION WITH THE DC THAT WILL HAVE THE BLESSING OF THE US AND OF EUROPE. WITHOUT A DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY, THE DC WILL BE OBLIGED TO REVISE ITS DOMESTIC POLICY AND TO ASSOCIATE WITH THE PCI. HE ADDED THAT, "NO ONE IN THE DC WISHES TO COOPERATE WITH THE PCI, IF HE HAS THE CHOICE. BUT THE DC MAY NOT HAVE THAT CHOICE, AND MAY BE OBLIGED TO DO IT." CONTINUING, COSSIGA SAID THAT THE DC HAD CRITICIZED THE MANNER IN WHICH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT SPOKE JUST RECENTLY; NEVERTHELESS, THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IS AWARE OF THE FACT THAT THE GREAT WESTERN NATIONS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ITALY'S SITUATION. AND THE PROBLEM IS NOT JUST ITALIAN, SINCE IT INVOLVES THE BALANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, IN EUROPE AND IN THE ENTIRE WORLD.

7. RETURNING TO THE PROBLEM OF THE SMALLER DEMOCRATIC PARTIES IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM SENATOR RIBICOFF, COSSIGA SAID THAT CONTINUED OPPOSITION OF THESE PARTIES TO FORMING A COALITION WITH THE DC COULD ONLY HAVE NEGATIVE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. THE DC IS AWARE THAT THE LEADERS OF THESE PARTIES HAVE INTENSE CONTACTS WITH US POLITICIANS AND WITH THE SOCIALIST AND RADICAL FORCES OF OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. IN THIS REGARD, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ROME 13414 01 OF 02 171920Z

COSSIGA ASKED BRITISH HOME MINISTER JENKINS RECENTLY TO TALK TO THE SMALL PARTY LEADERS, AND SIMILAR REQUESTS WILL BE MADE OF THE GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ROME 13414 02 OF 02 171830Z

65

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 024717

R 171700Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9491

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 13414

EXDIS

8. AS FOR THE FUTURE, COSSIGA SUGGESTED THAT IF HE WERE AN AMERICAN HE WOULD HAVE TWO PROJECTS: 1) TO GIVE ITALY A CHANCE TO REMAIN IN THE INTERNATIONAL POSITION SHE IS IN TODAY; AND 2) TO PLAN THE KIND OF RELATIONS IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE WITH THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES WERE THE PCI TO ENTER THE MAJORITY-- SINCE THIS IS A VERY CONCRETE POSSIBILITY. ON THE FIRST POINT, ITALY NEEDS FINANCIAL HELP AND SHE NEEDS IT NOW. THE PSI CANNOT AGREE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT WITH THE DC WITHOUT A SOLID ECONOMIC PROGRAM THAT WILL LEAD TO THE RESOLUTION OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITHOUT SOCIAL UNREST. CONSEQUENTLY, ITALY NEED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE NOW BEFORE THE DEMOCRATIC COALITION IS FORMED OR IT WILL BE ECONOMICALLY HELPFUL BUT POLITICALLY USELESS. REGARDING THE SECOND POINT, COSSIGA INDICATED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF WE WOULD INVITE SOME SOCIALIST LEADERS TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES. (I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD DISCUSSED THIS IDEA WITH CRAXI JUST A FEW DAYS AGO.) ONE OF THE OBJECTIVES, ACCORDING TO HIM, WOULD BE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE IN AMERICAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS ITALY REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS THE FORTHCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS. THE PCI IS SPREADING THE WORD AROUND THAT CARTER, IF HE WINS, WOULD HAVE A "SOFTER" APPROACH AND ONE GETS THE SAME IMPRESSION FROM PRESS STORIES EMINATING FROM THE US. COSSIGA SAID HE HAD READ ALL OF CARTER'S STATEMENTS AND IS CONVINCED THT CARTER WOULD PROPOSE NO OPENING TO THE PCI, BUT OTHERS HAVE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ROME 13414 02 OF 02 171830Z

FALLEN VICTIM TO PROPAGANDA.

9. RIBICOFF ASKED COSSIGA WHETHER IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF HE MET WITH BERLINGUER OR CRAXI. COSSIGA RESPONDED THAT "IT WOULD BE INTERESTING FOR YOU TO HAVE

A MEETING WITH BERLINGUER, BUT A MEETING WITH CRAXI WOULD BE IMPORTANT. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT CRAXI IS A MAN THE ESTERN WORLD CAN TRUST."

10. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER THERE ARE SUFFICIENT CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE ON THE SUBJECT OF ITALY, COSSIGA SAID THAT THERE IS THE FEELING THAT ITALY IS BEING LEFT OUT OF MANY DISCUSSIONS, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS NATO OR SECURITY MATTERS. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT SURPRISE HIM UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND HE UNDERSTANDS THE REASONS FOR THIS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE HAVE THOROUGHLY APPRECIATED THE REALITY OF ITALY'S PROBLEM AND THE FACT THAT IT HAS A DEADLINE COMING UP NOT IN A MATTER OF YEARS "BUT PERHAPS IN EIGHT MONTHS, CERTAINLY NOT MORE THAN A YEAR'S TIME."

11. COSSIGA TOLD US THAT HE IS VERY CONCERNED ABOUT DOMESTIC SECURITY. ITALY IS SERIOUSLY TROUBLED BY TERRORISM AND SUBVERSION, AND IT IS HIS OPINION THAT SUCH ACTIVITIES ARE OF INTERNATIONAL ORIGIN. AS MINISTER OF INTERIOR, HE CANNOT FIGHT THEM ALONE, AND IS RELIANT UPON THE COOPERATION OF OTHER EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCE AN SECURITY SERVICES FOR HELP.

12. FINALLY COSSIGA CONFIDED THAT FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI AND HE HAD RECENTLY HAD A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE NEED FOR THE DC TO EXPLAIN TO ITS FRIENDS ABROAD THE REALITIES OF THEITALIAN SITUATION. THEY AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE A GROUP OF FIVE OR SIX ITALIAN POLITICIANS TRAVEL THROUGH EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES ON AN INFORMAL BASIS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS TASK.VOLPE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL LEADERS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME13414
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG PER ROME 13587
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760315-1144
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760846/aaaabnvi.tel
Line Count: 256
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <24 AUG 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VIEWS OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR COSSIGA SUMMARY. ON AUGUST 16, SENATOR ABRAHAM RIBICOFF AND I CALLED ON MINISTER OF INTERIOR FRANCESCO COSSIGA WHO IS O
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, US, IT, (COSSIGA, FRANCESCO), (RIBCOFF, ABRAHAM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006